

## VI. Needs Assessment & Identification

Three different approaches were utilized to identify and assess the recreation, park, and open space needs of Wichita Falls over the next decade. These different approaches are necessary due to the unique features of recreation, park, and open space resources. Land availability, for example, lends itself to standards, whereas programs and facilities needs arise from public demand. Open spaces linked to floodplains and water resources, on the other hand, are resource driven.

The three approaches, as discussed below, are integrated so that the needs are area, facility, and program specific, and are also tied to the overall goals and objectives of the city's Parks & Recreation Department.

### A. Standards-Base Approach

#### 1. Parkland

As detailed in **Section IV** of this plan, general standards provide the initial basis for determining how much of each classification of parks will be needed to meet Wichita Falls' population.

The National Recreation and Park Association's 1983 Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines made specific recommendations of park acreage for mini, neighborhood, and community parks per 1,000 population. The 1996 Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines further made the recommendations to include large urban parks and trail systems. While NRPA subsequently moved to recommend a more flexible approach to land, facility, and service provision in its 1996 guidelines, the City of Wichita Falls found the standards useful for initial planning purposes, subject to population needs, resource availability, and funding.

Specifically, as illustrated in **Table 27**, the city will attempt to provide a ratio of neighborhood and community parkland, considered 'core parkland' within walking distance by NRPA, of 6 acres per 1,000 residents (1 acre of neighborhood parks and 5 acres of community parks per 1,000). Additionally, it will attempt to provide a ratio of large urban and regional parkland, considered to be within short driving distance, of 12 acres per 1,000 residents (5 acres of large urban parks and 7 acres of regional parks per 1,000).

As discussed in **Section I**, an annual population growth rate has been considered to guide planning for park, recreation, and open space needs for Wichita Falls. By projecting expected population levels in 2010, the amount of new parkland needed to meet the general local standard of 6 acres of 'core' parkland (neighborhood & community) and 12 acres of parkland within a 'short driving distance' (large urban & regional) can be projected. Every attempt will be made to develop parkland in areas where little or no park acreage currently exists. **Map E** illustrates neighborhood and community parks and the areas of the city that they serve. Although large urban and regional parks are designed to serve a much larger area, these parks are also included on the map, but only show a 2 mile radius so that they are recognized as serving a community park service area. In the Five Year Plan, the Wichita Falls Park Board realized a need for additional parkland and also the need to utilize one of the city's greatest water resources, Lake Wichita. In order to combine the two, the Park Board

proposes acquisition of property adjacent to the East Side of the lake, to Old Lake Road (FM2380), to the spillway, in order to build a community park. Facilities for the new Lake Wichita area community park are discussed in (B) and (C) of this section.

**Table 27**  
**Comparison of Park Classification Acreage Standards Per 1,000 Residents**

Park Class	Total Existing Acreage	*Present Acreage per 1,000	NRPA Standard Acreage per 1,000	Local Standard Acreage per 1,000
Mini	32.26	.31	.25 - .5	.25
Neighborhood	111.67	1.07	1 – 2	1
Community	144.20	1.38	5– 8	5
Large Urban	124.15	1.19	5– 10	5
Regional	671.02	6.44	5– 10+	7

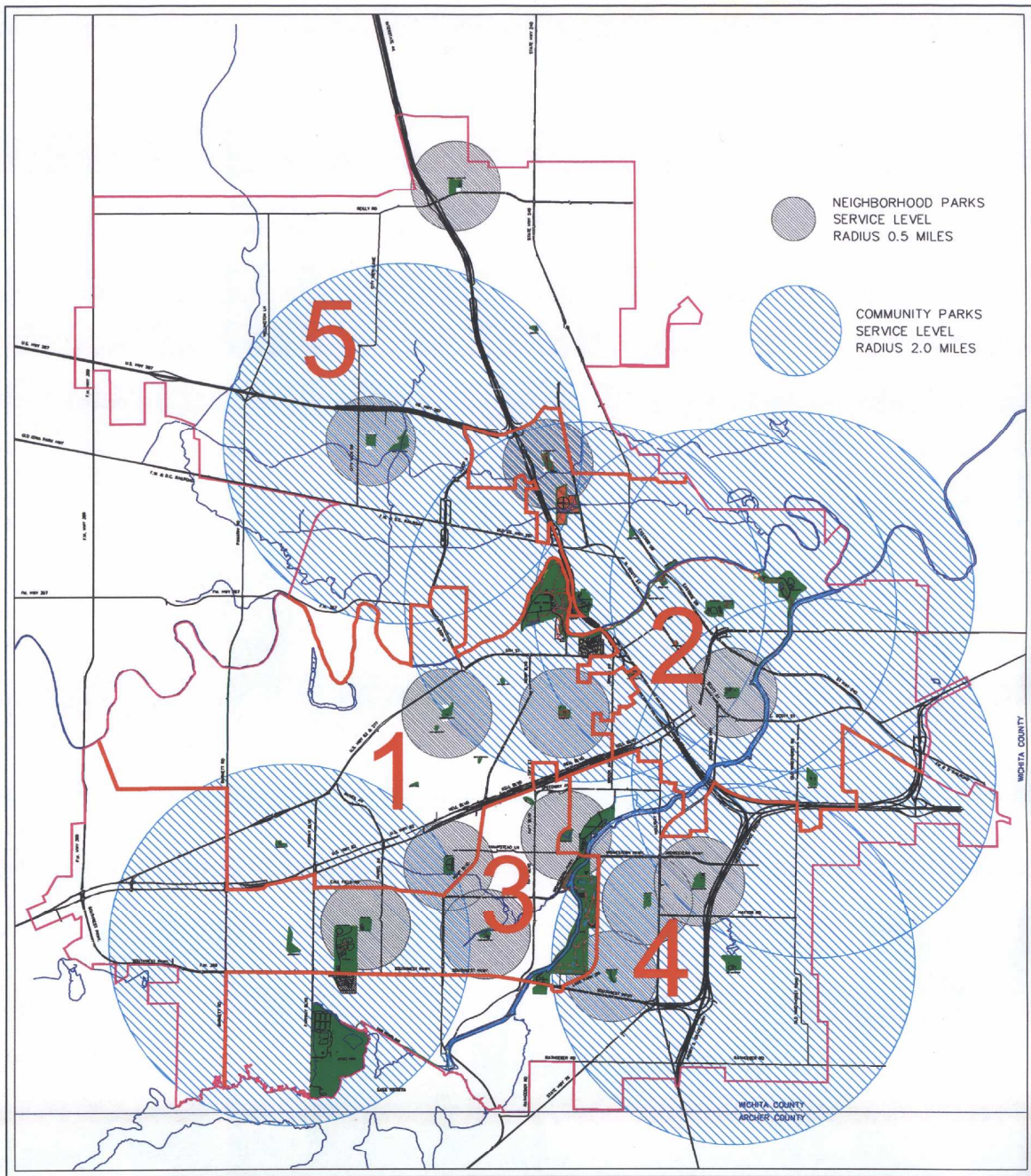
*\* Calculated using 2000 Census population of 104,197.*

The Parks & Recreation Department's focus for the next ten years will be on the provision and development of additional community and large urban parkland and the development of regional and athletic parks.

## **2. Park Facilities**

Park facilities in Wichita Falls are provided on a mixture of standard, demand, and resource bases. Standard-based facilities include basketball slabs & courts, play units, shelters and similar items commonly found in city parks. For example, the Parks & Recreation Department has established a standard of a basketball goal with slab, drinking fountain, park benches, park security lights, picnic unit, shelter, sand based play unit, and trails/walks in all neighborhood, community, large urban and regional parks. Group pavilions are standard in all large urban and regional parks. There are currently 15 parks with basketball slabs & goals. Four neighborhood parks, two community parks & one large urban park do not have a basketball slab with goal, leaving a deficit of seven half-courts. Of the five large urban and regional parks, four have a group pavilion, leaving a deficit of one.

Other standard-based facilities will be added as new parks are developed, unless the public input process indicates that they are not needed. The Parks & Recreation Department does not plan to provide some facilities or increase the numbers of some facilities, such as youth baseball fields, because many of those demands are being met by the private sector. The projected needs for some of the standards-based facilities include the following, which are further identified by park and park classification in **Tables 28A, 28B, 28C, 28D & 28E**.



\* *Note: Facilities listed within each classification of **Table 28** are the minimum facility standards established by the Parks & Recreation Department for those parks. ‘X’ indicates existing facilities, ‘-’ indicates deficiency.*

**Table 28A - Facility Deficiencies & Needs**

**Mini Parks**

(1) Belair (2) Ben Donnell (3) Bud Daniel (4) Conoco (5) Front & Indiana (6) Grant St. (7) Harold Jones (8) Indian Heights (9) Jarratt (10) Lincoln (11) Lions (12) Morningside (13) O'Reilly (14) Park Central (15) Roselawn

<b>Park</b>	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
<b>Facilities</b>															
Drinking fountain	-	-	-	X	-	-	X	-	X	-	-	-	X	X	-
Park bench	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	-	-
Security light	X	-	-	-	-	X	X	-	-	X	X	-	X	X	-
Park sign	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X
Picnic area	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Picnic table	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	X	-	X	X	-
Trail / walk	-	X	X	-	X	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	-

**Table 28B - Facility Deficiencies & Needs**

**Neighborhood Parks**

(1) Bridwell (2) City View (3) Edgemere (4) Expressway Village (5) Hursh (6) Jalonick (7) Lynwood East (8) Martin Plaza (9) Rotary (10) Westover Hills (11) Wood Memorial

<b>Park</b>	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
<b>Facilities</b>													
Barbecue grill	X	-	-	-	-	X	X	-	X	-	X	X	-
Basketball slab (with goal)	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	-
Bench	X	-	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	X
Drinking fountain	X	-	-	-	X	X	X	-	X	-	X	X	X
Security light	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	-
Park sign	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Picnic area	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Picnic unit (table)	X	-	X	X	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-
Picnic shelter	X	-	-	X	X	X	X	-	X	-	X	X	-
Play unit (sand base)	X	X	X	X	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	X
Practice backstop	-	X	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	X	-	X	-
Soccer goal	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	-	X	-
Trail / walk	X	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-



**Table 28C - Facility Deficiencies & Needs**

**Community Parks**

(1) Lamar (2) Loch Lomond (3) Scotland (4) Spudder (5) Sunset Terrace (6) Williams

Park	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Facilities</b>						
Barbecue grill	X	-	X	-	-	X
Basketball slab (with goal)	-	X	X	-	X	X
Bench	X	-	X	X	X	X
Drinking fountain	X	X	X	-	-	X
Security light	X	X	X	X	X	X
Park sign	X	X	X	X	X	X
Picnic area	X	X	X	X	X	X
Picnic unit (table)	X	X	X	X	-	-
Picnic shelter	-	X	X	X	X	X
Play unit						
(sand base)	X	-	X	X	-	-
Practice backstop	X	X	X	-	X	X
Restroom	X	X	X	X	-	X
Soccer goals	-	-	X	-	-	-
Trail / walk	-	-	X	-	-	X



*Practice baseball / softball backstops (above left) are standard in all neighborhood, community and urban parks. Picnic units (above right) are standard in all parks in the city with the exception of mini-parks.*

**Table 28D - Facility Deficiencies & Needs**

**Large Urban Parks**

<b>Park</b>	<b>Hamilton</b>	<b>Kiwanis</b>
<b>Facilities</b>		
Barbecue grill	-	X
Basketball court (with 2 goals)	-	-
Basketball slab (with goal)	-	X
Bench	X	X
Drinking fountain	X	X
Flower bed	X	X
Horseshoe court	-	-
Multi-purpose field	X	X
Security light	X	X
Park sign	X	X
Picnic area	X	X
Picnic unit (table)	-	-
Picnic shelter	X	X
Group pavilion	-	X
Play unit (sand base)	-	X
Pond	-	-
Practice backstop	-	X
Restroom	X	X
Soccer goals	-	-
Trail / walk	-	-





**Table 28E - Facility Deficiencies & Needs**

**Regional Parks**

<b>Park</b>	Lake Wichita	Lucy	Weeks
<b>Facilities</b>			
Barbecue grill	-	X	X
Basketball court (with 2 goals)	-	-	-
Basketball goals	X	X	X
Basketball slab (with goal)	X	X	X
Bench	-	X	X
Concession stand	X	X	X
Disc golf course	X	X	-
Drinking fountain	X	X	X
Fishing pier	-	X	X
Flower bed	-	X	X
Gazebo	-	X	-
Horseshoe court	-	X	-
Indoor rental facility	-	X	-
Multi-purpose field	X	X	X
Security light	X	X	X
Park sign	X	X	X
Picnic area	X	X	X
Picnic unit (table)	-	X	X
Picnic shelter	X	X	-
Group pavilion	X	X	X
Play unit (sand base)	-	X	-
Pond	X	X	X
Restroom	X	X	X
Trail / walk	-	X	X
Volleyball court	-	X	-



*Decorative gazebo-type structures pictured above & below are used as shelters in several of the parks*



*Indoor rental facilities, such as the Lucy Park Log Cabin (left), are proposed standards for all regional parks.*

Basketball courts – Five new (full-court) basketball courts with concrete surface and goals, will be needed over the next ten years. This includes 2 in the large urban parks and 3 in the regional parks. This figure does not take into consideration courts for any new parks.



Basketball slabs – Seven new half-court basketball slabs with goals, like the one pictured, are needed over the same time period. Four are needed in neighborhood parks, two in community parks, and one in large urban parks.

Picnic shelters – Seven additional picnic shelters, such as the one pictured to the right, are needed. Five shelters will go in neighborhood parks while one each will go in community and regional parks.



Group pavilions – One group pavilion is needed in a large urban park in order to bring that park up to standards with regards to pavilion requirements, however, additional group pavilions are needed in 2 regional parks. These are recommended in the Park Board's Five Year Plan and will be further discussed in the 'demands' portion of this section.

Horseshoe courts – Four horseshoe courts are needed. Large urban parks currently have none, therefore two are needed there and two are needed in the regional parks.





Play units with sand base – More than half of the parks are in need of sand based play units similar to the one pictured above. Fourteen parks, including seven neighborhood, three community, one large urban and two regional parks are deficient of these units.



Volleyball courts – Two volleyball courts, similar to the one above, are needed in the regional parks in order to conform to local standards.

**Table 29** provides a listing of additional ‘other’ facilities, standardized by number of residents, as they are needed to meet local standards through the year 2011.

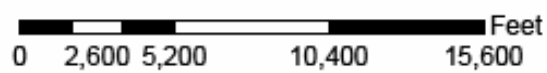
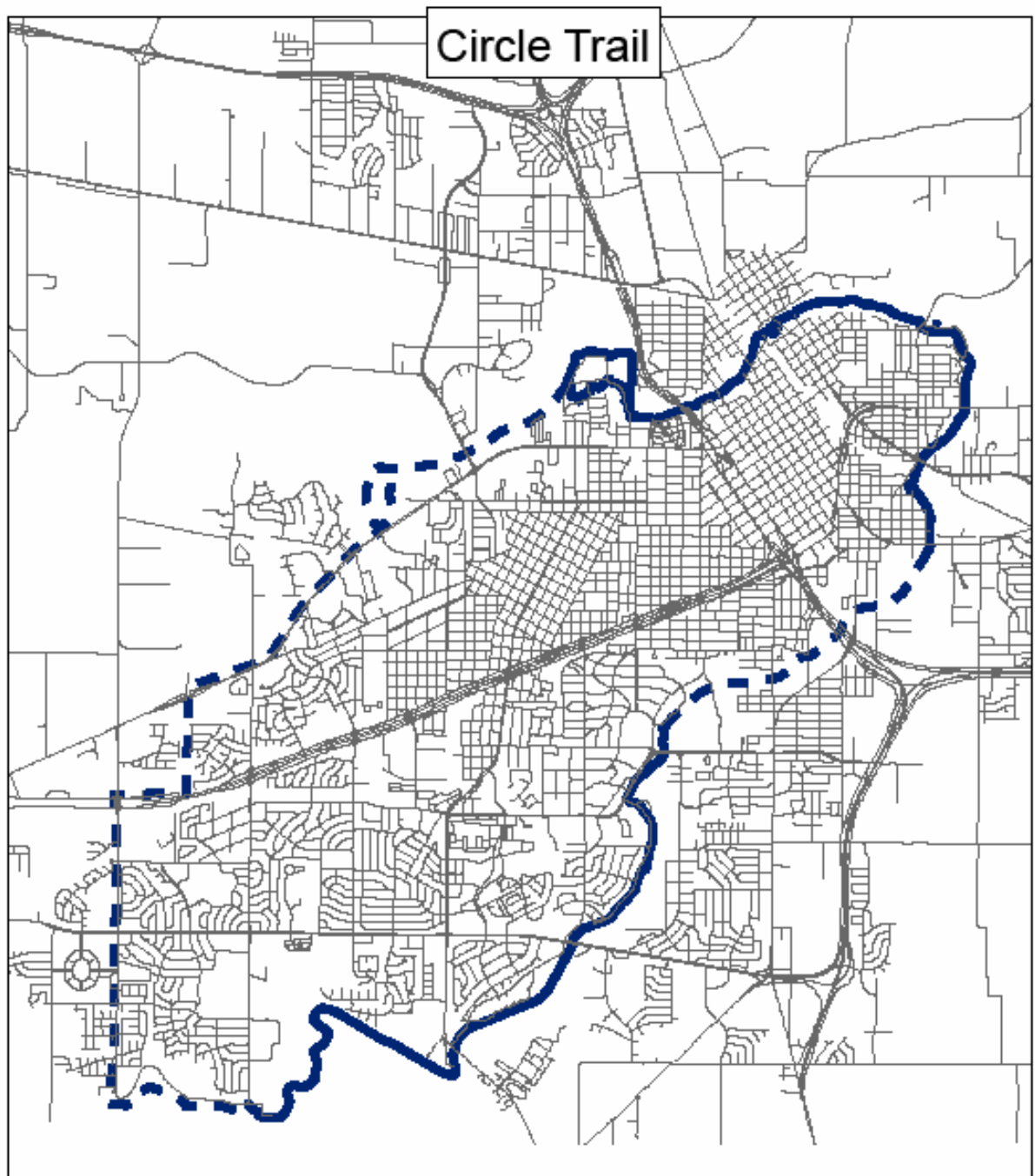
## Resource-based Approach

A major objective of any park-planning document should be to identify significant natural resources and seek their inclusion in the parks and recreation system. In addition to several acres of floodplain, because Wichita Falls is in a very arid area, the Big Wichita River, Holliday Creek, McGrath Creek, Sikes Lake, Plum Lake and Lake Wichita are significant water resources in Wichita Falls. As previously mentioned in **Section IV** a greenway/trail system within the city is highly desired. This system, although somewhat extensive, has only been partially realized. The project remains popular and is included in the goals in **Section II**. Much of the greenway/trail system is planned to connect several parks using floodplain, corridors, easements, rights-of-way, and shorelines of the aforementioned resources. **Map F** illustrates the existing trails and proposed trail system.



### 1. Parkland

Discussions of improvements around and including Lake Wichita have been ongoing. The Park Board's Five Year Plan, referred to earlier in **Section III** of this plan, and well received by city council, discusses these improvements. In reference to resources, the Five Year Plan identified the following:

- Land acquisition adjacent to the East Side of Lake Wichita, to include new park development, landscaping, a large pavilion and pier.  
*This project has been in the planning stages for several months. The proposal is to acquire land adjacent to Lake Wichita between the new boat ramp, Old Lake Road (FM2380) and the new spillway, for the development of a new community park, a class of park deficient in the city. Amenities proposed for the new park include landscaping, an ornamental shelter, indoor rental facility, a large, partially covered pier extending 200 feet into the lake, an RV Park, trail, and indoor dining facility. This park will be located on much of the property, with the same great view, as of one of the original recreation facilities in Wichita Falls. The original indoor/outdoor pavilion, pier and recreation area were constructed in the early 1900's and provided recreation, not only for citizens of Wichita Falls but much of north Texas and southern Oklahoma. Fire destroyed the pavilion and pier many years ago, but the nostalgia and desire to use the area for recreation remain. **Map G** illustrates the area of proposed acquisition and the connecting greenway/trail along Lake Wichita to Lake Wichita Park.*
- Shoreline, spillway and boat ramp excavation at Lake Wichita.
- A botanic display development along the Holliday Creek section of the greenway/trail system.
- Development and landscaping of an urban walkway along McGrath Creek from Kemp Street, past Wood Park and Sikes Lake to the Wichita Falls Museum & Art Center.

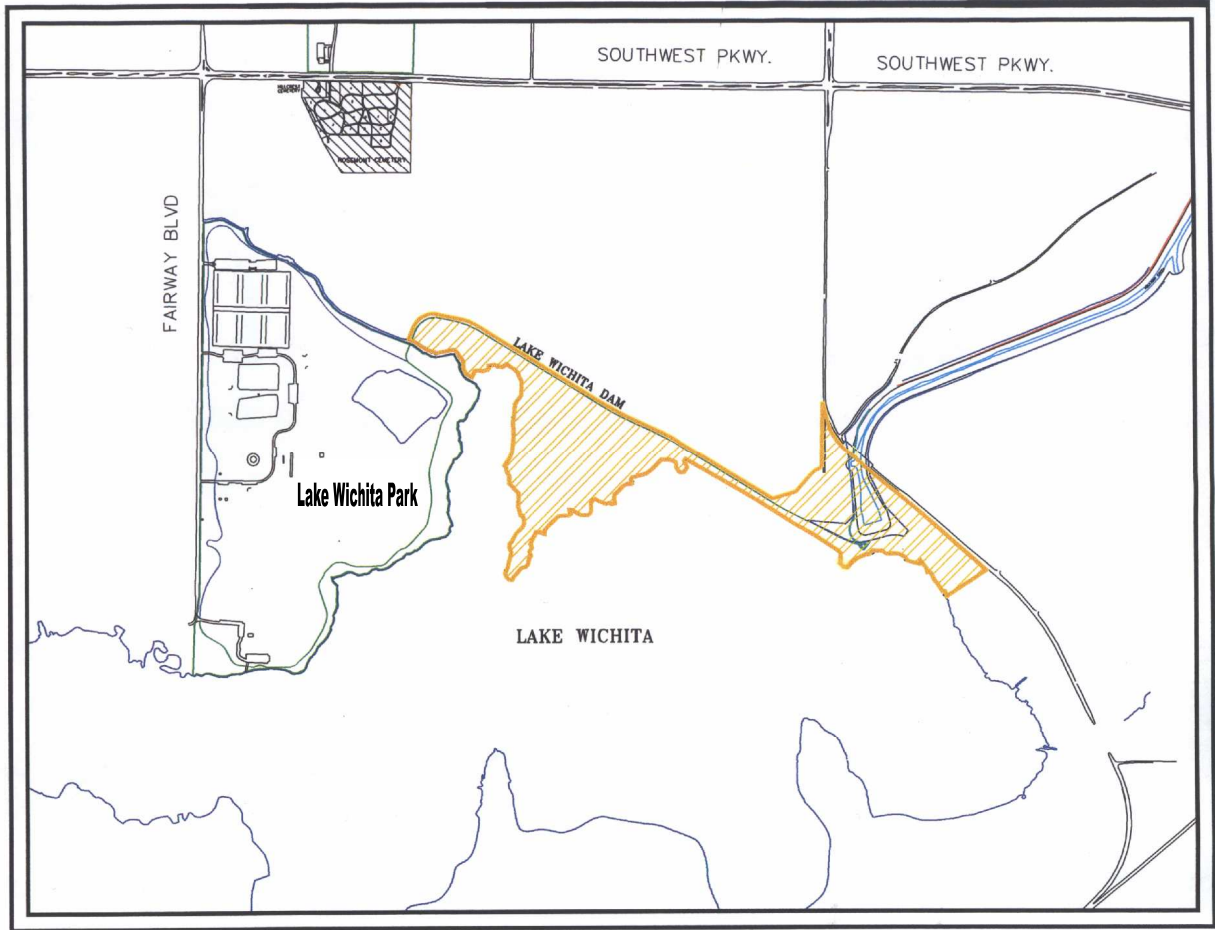


**Legend**

-  PROPOSED TRAIL
-  TRAIL

City of Wichita Falls Planning Department - Map Product





The city not only realizes the value of using existing available resources, but desires to develop additional water resources. Several city parks have man-made ponds and lakes. Included in the Five Year Plan recommended by Park Board, is the construction of 2 additional park ponds, one each for Expressway Village Park and Southern Hills Park.

## **B. Demand-based Approach**

A demand-base approach attempts to meet the community's desires for certain types of park and recreation facilities and services. Public views have been gathered through a variety of means. As described in **Section III**, many of the recommendations were derived from the 1983 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element, although accomplished several years ago, the 'Element' is very applicable to the city's needs. The latest plan, Five Year Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan, proposed to City Council by the Park Board, identified additional unmet demands.

As previously described in **Section III**, citizen opinions of parks & recreation services were solicited through several surveys conducted by Midwestern State University. Additionally, public participation in programs and utilization of facilities are very important factors in determining both demand and need.

### **1. Parkland**

As described in (A) above, the provision of mini, neighborhood, community, large urban, and regional parkland is generally standard-based, although adaptations may be made according to the unique needs of each community. NRPA standards indicate Wichita Falls to be very deficient in several classifications of parkland, which is also addressed and described in (A) above. It is perceived that public demand for additional parkland will be met by achieving the local standards.

Although the new community park, with shelter, indoor rental facility, large covered pier, RV Park, trail, and indoor dining facility, proposed for the East Side of Lake Wichita is previously identified in (B) because of the amenity of Lake Wichita, it is also included in the demand-based approach. Citizens requested additional parkland in earlier surveys.

### **2. Park Facilities**

In the 1996 Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, NRPA recommends that projected park facility needs be based upon citizen desires and specific regional needs. In Wichita Falls, the primary use of park facilities is by the residents of the community. However, park designs are also determined by the city's desire to attract local, state and regional sporting tournaments and events in order to spur economic development. This provides an "added value" for the cost of developing and maintaining these facilities.

To project the need for various sporting facilities, the Park Board and the staff reviewed current facility availability, use and deficiencies. The criteria in this review included history and trends (registration, future population needs, tournaments & events hosted in past years, as well as, opportunities to host future tournaments and events, and requests for more facilities). **Table 30** provides a summary of annual participation figures for a variety of parks & recreation programs (*these figures do not include spectators and observers who also utilize the park facilities*). In the year 2000, there was existing unmet demand for a range of athletic and other facilities. Projections for this demand for recreation facilities and other major demands of the public were detailed previously in **Table 29**.

**LAKE WICHITA AREA COMMUNITY PARK FACILITIES:** As previously discussed in (B), the following new facilities are needed and have been requested through citizen surveys in the proposed new community park on the East Side of Lake Wichita:

- Park landscaping
- Ornamental group shelter
- Indoor rental facility for large group gatherings
- A partially covered, 20 X 200 foot pier, extending into Lake Wichita
- Trails & walkways through the park connecting to the Holliday Creek Trail
- Indoor dining facility overlooking the water (restaurant)
- RV Park



*Area between the dam and boat ramp at Lake Wichita (above) where land acquisition and park development is proposed.*



**Table 30**  
**Wichita Falls Parks & Recreation Department**  
**Annual Program Participation Figures**

<b>Program Classification</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Registered or Documented Participants</b>	<b>Annual Participation Numbers</b>
Athletics	Basketball	557	5,570
	Flag Football	105	840
	Softball	4,648	102,256
	Volleyball	120	2,400
	Softball Tournaments	4,950	99,025
	Youth Track	89	2,848
	Youth Track Meets	315	945
<i>Total Athletics</i>		<i>10,784</i>	<i>213,884</i>
Aquatics	Open Swimming	6,833	6,833
	Swimming Lessons	208	2,080
<i>Total Aquatics</i>		<i>7,041</i>	<i>8,913</i>
Instructional Classes	Dance, Fitness, and Enrichment	3,334	17,210
<i>Total Instructional Classes</i>		<i>3,334</i>	<i>17,210</i>
Outdoor Concerts	Spring Series	800	3100
	Summer Series	800	3775
<i>Total Outdoor Concerts</i>			<i>6876</i>
Senior Citizens	Sr. Zone (citizen center)	3,016	31,250
	Sr. Citizen Dances	1,320	1,320
	Sr. Citizen Volleyball	32	2,304
<i>Total Senior Citizen Programs</i>		<i>4,368</i>	<i>34,874</i>
Summer Day Camps	Harmony	105	1,050
	Adventure Camp	25	500
	Lotsafun	220	2,200
	Fit 'n' Fun	200	2,000
	Discovery	140	1,400
<i>Total Summer Day Campers</i>		<i>690</i>	<i>7,150</i>
Tennis	League Players	362	2,185
	Tournament Players	6,185	6,185
	Permit Players	227	15,532
	Court Fee Players	3,914	3,914
	Clinics & Camps	115	575
<i>Total Tennis Participation</i>		<i>10,803</i>	<i>27,391</i>

**Table 30 (continued)**  
**Wichita Falls Parks & Recreation Department**  
**Annual Program Participation Figures**

Special Events	Easter Egg Hunt	3,000	3,000
	Cheerleading Clinic & Contest	227	227
	Halloween in the Park	2,300	2,300
	Kids' Fishing Rodeo	800	800
	Christmas in the Park	200	200
	<i>Total Special Event Participants</i>	<i>6,527</i>	<i>6,527</i>
External Groups	YMCA Kid Baseball	1,200	18,000
	Boys Club Football	880	7,040
	Tex-Mex Baseball	150	1,800
	<i>Total External Group Participants</i>	<i>2,230</i>	<i>26,840</i>
<i>Grand Total Participation</i>		<i>46,527</i>	<i>346,514</i>

*Note: Figures do not reflect spectators or visitors*



*One of the most popular programs in the city is the youth dance program. Pictured above is a youth jazz & ballet class in the newly renovated dance studio located in the Recreation Center.*

**COVERED OUTDOOR MULTI-PURPOSE COURTS:** Currently, 1 covered, lighted multi-purpose court with 6 basketball goals exists in the city. Although the facility is sufficient to accommodate demand in that particular area of the city, it is insufficient to meet the demands of the entire community. Courts such as this provide a place for basketball, volleyball, roller hockey, and other sporting activities, as well as, providing shelter and lighting for large gatherings and special events. Immediate need exists for an additional multipurpose court while a second new facility is needed by the year 2005.

**CONCRETE MULTI-USE TRAILS:** The city presently has 9.47 miles of concrete trail in place, of the linear trail system proposed for the community. The greenway/trail system plan calls for approximately 47 miles of trail, including connector trails to neighborhoods and parks. Phases of the system will be completed as funding becomes available.



*Pictured above is one of the heavier used sections of the trail/greenway system. This section parallels Holliday Creek and is adjacent to Weeks Park.*

**MULTI-COURT INDOOR GYMNASIUMS:** The city currently has no gymnasiums and uses public school facilities when available. Basketball leagues and volleyball leagues are unable to expand in order to accommodate demand. Present immediate need is for one, 3-court gymnasium with the additional needs to be determined



by future demand. These facilities will also serve as recreation centers, as the city has only one center.

**SOFTBALL COMPLEX:** The city currently has one 8-field softball complex for adult play. The second 4-field complex was completed in 2008 and consolidates all city league games in one facility. The new complex also allows the city to bring tournaments to the city that in the past it did not meet the minimum standards to host.

**GROUP PAVILIONS:** The city currently has 10 group pavilions that can accommodate between 75 and 100 people. During peak seasons, all facilities are booked well in advance. One additional facility is needed for Hamilton Park in order to meet standards and 2 additional facilities are planned for Lake Wichita Park and Lucy Park in the Five Year Plan. As mentioned above, a group pavilion is also recommended for the new park proposed on the East Side of Lake Wichita.

**INDOOR RENTAL FACILITY:** The Lucy Park Log Cabin is presently the only indoor park rental facility availability to residents. This facility is heavily used year round and booked well in advance. A second facility is needed for the Lake Wichita area between now and the year 2005, and projections indicate that a third indoor rental facility is needed by 2011.

**OUTDOOR THEATER:** The city currently has no outdoor theater but has a very successful spring and summer outdoor concert series. Concerts are held at various locations that will permit the event. An outdoor theater would allow for a better setting and atmosphere. This facility scored highly as a needed amenity on several surveys.

**BOTANIC CENTER:** There are no existing botanic centers in the community. Although there are several areas of beautification in the city, provided by the Parks & Recreation Department, there have been numerous requests for a botanic center. This facility was also very highly desired on surveys. It would be constructed along the trail system.

**SKATE BOARD PARK:** The city currently has one skate park within the Wichita Falls Sports Complex.

### **3. Programs**

The Wichita Falls Parks & Recreation Department provides a variety of athletic, instructional, educational, entertainment and aquatic programs. As **Table 30** illustrates, these range from adult softball to swimming lessons to dance instruction to senior citizen programs to summer youth camps to outdoor concerts.



*The Parks & Recreation Department averages over 3,300 individual registrations in dance, fitness and enrichment classes annually.*



*Special events, such as the Kids' Fishing Rodeo, co-sponsored by Texas Parks & Wildlife (pictured left) attract thousands of participants of all ages every year.*

Similarly, the Parks & Recreation staff has identified the need for additional programs necessitating indoor facilities, recreation centers, gymnasiums, and senior centers which will justify both the use of existing, available school facilities and the need for new parks and recreation indoor facilities. These include programs that will be oriented to the growing senior population, an active adult population and special youth populations including teens.



*The city offers an outstanding tennis program with 2 tennis centers managed by tennis professionals. Programs include tournaments, leagues, clinics and camps, as well as, individual and group lessons.*

*City basketball leagues must be restricted due to the lack of public facilities. Junior high school gyms are used if and when space is available.*



*Grants received from the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and other sources allow the city to provide outdoor camping experiences and education for at risk children and youths.*